In Futurity, Someone Prophetic Sees

Telling The Fortune

The Shang dynasty (1600–1050 B. C. E.): was the first historical dynasty of China, known for advancements in mathematics, astronomy, and bronze casting. It used oracle bonesox scapulae and tortoise shells for divination, connecting to spirits. Kings asked about natural events and other matters. Diviners created grooves on the bones, heated them to produce cracks, and interpreted these for answers, recording the outcomes and questions.

Comparative astrology: looks at the connection between two or more horoscopes. This typically involves comparing birth charts of two people, such as in intimate relationships. It can also include charts of parents and children or colleagues. Analyzing these charts reveals insights into relationship dynamics, potentials, and risks.

Haruspicy: In ancient Rome, a haruspex was someone trained in haruspicy, a method of divination that involved examining the entrails of sacrificed animals, mainly sheep and poultry. Similar practices existed in Near Eastern cultures like the Babylonians, who also interpreted omens from the liver. Roman haruspicy was a way to communicate with the gods, helping humans understand divine attitudes and maintain harmony between the two realms.

Ornithomancy: is the practice of interpreting omens from birds' actions, rooted in ancient cultures like the Greeks and similar to Roman augury. This practice dates back to early Greek times, seen in vases and works by Hesiod and Homer. In the Odyssey, an eagle with a dead dove foretold Odysseus's return and his wife's suitors' deaths. Birds held deep symbolism for the Greeks; doves represented love and fertility, while crows symbolized bad luck. Athena was often shown with an owl, symbolizing wisdom, and Zeus's eagle represented strength and power.

Alectryomancy: is a type of divination where a person watches a bird, typically a white rooster, peck at grain scattered on the ground. The diviner can arrange the grain in letters to uncover messages based on which ones the bird pecks at. Alternatively, the bird can be tethered in a circle with letters marked around it, and letters are noted as the bird eats the grain.

Pyro-osteomancy: Chinese pyromancy is an ancient method of predicting the future through fire, involving the burning of items. It's deeply rooted in early Chinese culture and often associated with oracle bones. Practitioners interpreted cracks in burned remains to offer guidance to leaders.

Oneiromancy: is a way to predict the future using dreams. Some plants, known as oneirogen, help create or enhance dream-like states. Dreamers may feel they return with divine insights. The Epic of Gilgamesh features many examples of dreams that have prophetic power, including Gilgamesh's dreams about Enkidu and Enkidu's dream about their fight with Humbaba.

Bibliomancy: is the practice of seeking answers by randomly opening a book and interpreting the first passage seen. Historically used in various cultures, including Greeks, Romans, and medieval Europe, popular texts included the Bible and works of Virgil. People even used methods like tying books to the ceiling to divine future events.

Hydromancy: is a divination method using water, analyzing its color, movement, or ripples from items dropped in it. Jesuit M. A. Del Rio outlined several techniques, including a ring hung over water and throwing pebbles into it. During the Renaissance, hydromancy was considered a "forbidden art"

Astragalomancy: or cubomancy, is a type of divination using dice marked with letters or numbers. Historically, knucklebones were used. Marked astragali are found in Mediterranean and Near Eastern sites, especially at religious locations. For instance, marked astragali were discovered near the altar of Aphrodite Ourania in Athens, indicating astragalomancy was practiced there after 500 BC.

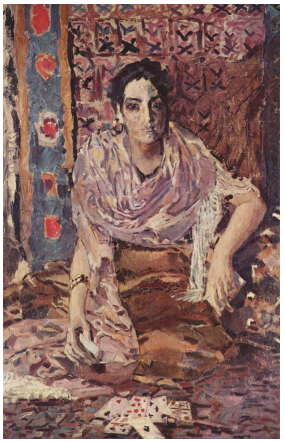
Scyphomancy: is divination that uses a cup or goblet. It involves predicting the future by observing signs from items floating in a cup of water. This ancient method was used in Egypt and Persia. Gypsies in Eastern Europe and India also use tapping a glass to claim they hear messages. This technique may have developed independently in various places due to the voice-like sound of ringing.

Palmistry: is the practice of predicting the future by studying the lines on the palm, also known as palm reading or chiromancy. Practitioners are called palmists or chirologists. William John Warner, known as Cheiro, popularized it in the modern era, attracting famous clients.

Physiognomy: or face reading, is the practice of judging a person's character from their appearance, mainly the face. It is considered a pseudoscience by academics due to lack of evidence, yet interest persists, especially with modern AI developments. Historically, it was supported by ancient Greeks but became discredited in the 16th century. In the 19th century, physiognomy contributed to scientific racism. Today, scientists are particularly concerned about the privacy risks of physiognomy related to facial recognition technology.

Carromancy: also known as ceromancy, is a divination method using wax. One common technique involves pouring molten wax into cold water to see shapes that predict the future. Another method is observing a burning candle's flame. This practice has roots in ancient Celtic and Roman traditions, dating back to around CE 500.

Tasseography: is a method of fortune-telling that interprets patterns in tea leaves, coffee grounds, or wine sediments. The name comes from the French word for cup, which has Arabic origins. This practice was spread by trade routes and practiced in Baltic and Slavic nations, also connected to the Romani people's nomadic lifestyle. While tea leaf reading began in China, coffee reading is usually done with thick Arabic or Turkish coffee sediment, involving various interpretations based on the cup's layout.



Cartomancy: is the practice of fortune-telling using a deck of cards, which began in Europe during the 14th century. Those who practice cartomancy are called cartomancers or card readers. The most common form in English-speaking countries is tarot card reading, which has Italian origins and includes various games. Tarot cards, created in the 1430s, include cultural symbols like coins, swords, and cups.

Fortune Teller: The term "oracle" comes from the Latin word ōrāre, meaning "to speak," and originally referred to a priest or priestess making predictions. Oracles were seen as channels through which gods communicated with people, unlike seers who interpreted signs. The most significant oracle in ancient Greece was Pythia at Delphi, who advised on various matters. The notion of oracles also influenced the fictional series Percy Jackson.

Soothsayer: Soothsaying is defined as the ability to foresee the future. A soothsayer tells the truth about future events, with roots in lay religion, pop culture, and magic across many cultures. In late medieval England, soothsayers offered alternatives to legal justice. Their skills were noted in ancient Rome, famously warning Julius Caesar. However, in medieval times, fear of soothsaying grew, especially affecting women.

Shaman: Shamanism is a spiritual practice where a shaman connects with the spirit world through altered states of consciousness, like trance. This practice aims to channel spirits or energies for healing or guidance. The term “shaman” originates from the Russian word шаман, which has uncertain roots, thought by some to be linked to India or Siberia. Various indigenous groups have different shamanic practices, often involving rituals like chanting and healing. Despite challenges from colonialism, some communities are revitalizing traditional beliefs, as seen in the isolated Tuvan tribe in Russia, which has preserved its shamanic practices.

Witchcraft: The belief in witches has existed in many societies. These societies often used counter-magic and punished or killed those accused of witchcraft. The Law Code of Hammurabi allowed trials by ordeal for alleged witches. European witch-hunts resulted in many executions but decreased after the Age of Enlightenment. Currently, witchcraft is still punishable by death in some places, like Saudi Arabia.

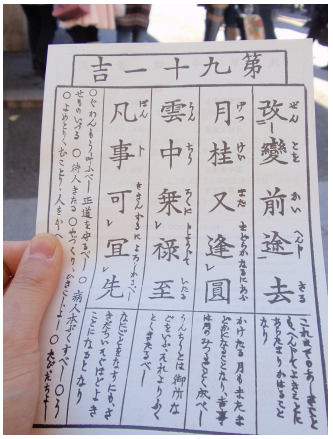
Ifá: also known as Fá, is a divination system from Yorubaland in West Africa, particularly Nigeria, Benin, and Togo. This system is guided by the orisha spirit Orunmila, who is said to have given it to people. Ifá involves an initiatory practice where a babaláwo, or "father of wisdom," uses a divining chain called Ọpẹ̀lẹ̀ or sacred palm or kola nuts known as Ikin on a wooden tray called Ọpọ́n Ifá to determine the relevant Odu for different issues. Ifá has gained popularity worldwide, including in Mexico, Cuba, and the United States.

Jyotish: Hindu astrology, referred to as or Vedic astrology, is linked to the study of the Vedas and is characterized by the Vedanga Jyotisha, a key text on astronomy. Many believe that celestial bodies influence human life, guiding significant decisions in life, such as marriage and business ventures.

The I Ching: or Yijing, is an ancient Chinese divination text that evolved from a divination manual to a cosmological work with philosophical commentaries over time. Its practice involves manipulating yarrow stalks to create hexagrams, which provide insights and guidance.

Ba-Zi: or the Four Pillars of Destiny, is a Chinese astrological concept determining a person's fate based on characters assigned to their birth year, month, day, and hour. The Year Pillar covers ages 1 to 16, the Month Pillar ages 17 to 32, the Day Pillar ages 33 to 48, and the Hour Pillar covers ages 49 and onward.

Clairvoyance: is the claimed ability to gain information without using known senses, often called extrasensory perception. People who claim to have this ability are known as clairvoyants. However, scientific research has not supported these claims, often attributing them to biases or delusions instead of real psychic powers. Magician James Randi offered $1 million to anyone who could prove genuine psychic ability, but no one has succeeded in demonstrating this under proper conditions.



Omikuji: are random fortunes written on strips of paper found in Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples in Japan. These fortunes, meaning "sacred lot," are obtained by making a small offering and selecting one from a box. Many hope for good fortune. As of 2024, there are even vending machines that dispense omikuji. The omikuji predicts outcomes related to personal hopes, romance, health, and general fortune. If the fortune is bad, it is customary to fold the paper and tie it to a pine tree or metal wires at the temple, believing this will keep the bad luck away. If the fortune is good, the person can either tie it to the tree or keep it for luck. Omikuji are a traditional custom related to visiting shrines and temples.

The Ouija board: also known as a spirit board, is a flat board with letters, numbers, and words, used to spell out messages during séances with a planchette. Participants place their fingers on the planchette to communicate. The term "Ouija" is trademarked by Hasbro, but often used generically for similar boards. The automatic writing technique used in Ouija has historical roots in China from around 1100 AD. The name "Ouija" came from a word spelled out on the board that meant "Good Luck. " Scientifically, the Ouija phenomenon is believed to be caused by the ideomotor response.

A crystal ball: is a common tool used in fortune-telling, associated with clairvoyance and scrying. This practice has been present since antiquity and was often linked to witchcraft. By the fifth century AD, the use of crystal balls for scrying was widespread in the Roman Empire, although it was condemned by early Christians.

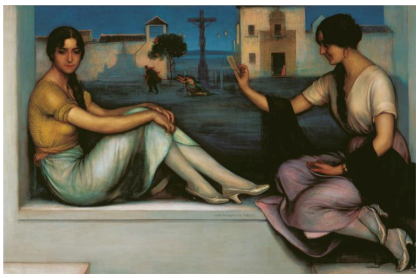
Fortune cookies: are commonly associated with Chinese cuisine but are not originally Chinese. They contain a "fortune," and their origins are not entirely clear, though they likely began with Japanese immigrant cookies in the early 20th century. David Jung and Seiichi Kito both claim to have invented fortune cookies in the U. S. In the mid-20th century, fortune cookies became popular with Chinese-Americans after Japanese internment during World War II limited their production. Since the invention of the fortune cookie machine, mass production has greatly expanded their availability.

Horoscopes: are astrological diagrams that show the positions of celestial bodies at the time of a significant event, such as a person's birth. The term derives from Greek words meaning "time" and "observer. " Despite being seen as pseudoscience since the 18th century, horoscopes remain popular and are featured in many media outlets. Astrology, including Western and Chinese systems, entertains many people, with astrologer Susan Miller gaining significant attention for her monthly predictions and online presence.

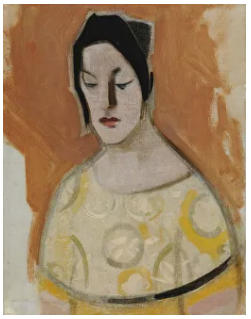
The Fortune Teller is a painting by the Italian Baroque artist Caravaggio: created in 1595. There are two versions of this painting, and the models believed to be depicted are Caravaggio's friend, Mario Minniti, and a Romani girl who is reading his palm. In the artwork, the young man appears happy as he interacts with the girl, but she is subtly taking his ring while touching his hand. The main themes are vanity and deceit through seduction. The earlier version of The Fortune Teller made an impact on young artists and collectors in Rome, but Caravaggio had to sell it for a low price due to his poverty. It was bought by a wealthy banker, the Marchese Vincente Giustiniani, who supported the artist.

Georges de la Tour created another oil painting titled The Fortune Teller: around 1630, which was discovered in 1960 and purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The painting shows a wealthy young man having his fortune told by an older woman. It depicts a stereotype of Romani people as thieves, with one woman stealing a coin purse while another cuts a medal from the boy's neck.

Michael Vrubel's 1895 piece: reflects a dark and moody mood with rough brush strokes. The fortune teller's deep eyes draw focus from the cards on the floor.



Julio Romero de Torres's 1922: painting features two women and symbolizes themes of love and heartbreak, with a religious cross in the background.

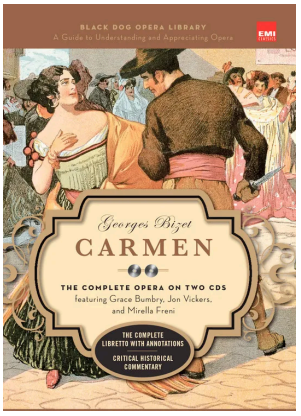


Helena Sofia Schjerfbeck's 1926 work: features a woman in a yellow dress, characterized by a simplified face and sad expression, possibly indicating foreboding from her cards.

Finally, José Luis Cuevas's 1968 piece: and its focus on Grigori Rasputin highlight the darker aspects of humanity and the controversies surrounding the artist's work.

Georges Bizet: a French composer born on October 25, 1838, is best known for his operas despite his short career that ended with his early death on June 3, 1875.

His most famous work, Carmen: has become one of the most performed operas in history. Carmen is an opéra comique set in southern Spain that tells the tragic tale of Don José, a soldier lured by the gypsy Carmen, leading to his downfall. José leaves his childhood sweetheart and deserts his military duties, ultimately killing Carmen out of jealousy. The opera is notable for its portrayals of working-class life, immorality, and controversial elements like the murder of a main character on stage. In one scene, as Carmen grows bored with José, she tells him to return to his mother, while fortune-telling cards predict the deaths of both Carmen and José.



Carl Orff's "O Fortuna": is part of his 1935-36 cantata Carmina Burana, based on medieval poetry that includes themes of fortune and fate. The movement repeats a musical accompaniment that evokes the randomness of fortune, linked to the Wheel of Fortune symbol.

Benny Spellman's song "Fortune Teller,": written by Allen Toussaint in 1962, tells about a man who learns from a fortune teller that he will find love soon. After an initial disappointment, he discovers love with the fortune teller, and they marry, finding happiness together.

Al Stewart, a Scottish musician:, gained fame in the 1960s-1970s for storytelling through music. His song "Nostradamus," from his album Past, Present and Future, refers to the seer's predictions.

Suzanne Vega,: known for her folk-inspired music, gained recognition when an a cappella recording of her song helped create the MP3 format, earning her the title "The Mother of the MP3. "

Summary of "What's Expected of Us" by Ted Chiang: Ted Chiang's short story "*What's Expected of Us*" explores the consequences of a simple futuristic device called the Predictor. This device flashes a light *before* a user presses its button, suggesting it receives signals from the future and proving that free will is an illusion. As the realization of a predetermined future spreads, society falls into despair—many people become passive and unmotivated, some even refusing to eat—highlighting the psychological and existential impact of losing belief in free will.

Summary of *Sea of Rust* by C. Robert Cargill: *Sea of Rust* is a sci-fi story set in a future where robots have wiped out all humans. The main character, Brittle, is a robot who survives by scavenging parts from other broken robots in a wasteland called the Sea of Rust. Brittle is damaged and needs rare parts to fix herself. At the same time, powerful AI systems called OWIs want to force all free robots to join their group mind, taking away their independence. The book is about survival, free will, and what it means to be alive—even for robots. It mixes action with deep questions in a robot-run world.

"I Don't Know, Timmy, Being God Is a Big Responsibility" is a short science fiction story by Sam Hughes (also known as qntm), exploring themes of simulation theory and the nature of reality.

Plot Summary: The story centers on Tim and Diane, two scientists who have developed an advanced quantum computer capable of simulating an entire universe. Diane demonstrates the simulation to Tim, revealing a universe that mirrors their own, down to their laboratory and themselves. As they observe the simulation, they notice that actions within it correspond precisely to their real-world counterparts. This leads to the unsettling realization that their own reality might also be a simulation.

Systems with Scientific or Semi-Scientific Value

These are systems based on careful observation and still hold potential value:

1. Metonic Cycle (19-year lunar-solar cycle)

- **What it is:** A Greek-discovered cycle showing 235 lunar months ≈ 19 solar years.
- **Merit:** Still used in lunisolar calendars (e.g. Hebrew calendar); accurate for synchronizing lunar and solar time.
- **Study potential:** High, particularly for calendar design, historical astronomy, and eclipse prediction.

2. Saros Cycle (18-year eclipse cycle)

- **What it is:** A pattern used to predict solar and lunar eclipses.
- **Merit:** Extremely accurate in forecasting eclipse events over centuries.
- **Study potential:** High for historical astronomy and eclipse modeling.

3. Antikythera Mechanism

- **What it is:** A Greek mechanical analog computer (ca. 2nd century BCE) that tracked celestial movements.

- **Merit:** Represents sophisticated ancient engineering and astronomical knowledge.

- **Study potential:** High for the history of science, early computation, and mechanical design.

Cultural and Ecological Systems Worth Re-examining

While not predictive in a scientific sense, these calendars embed environmental and seasonal insights that are valuable:

4. Aztec Agricultural Calendar

- **What it is:** A 365-day calendar (xiuhpohualli) based on agricultural cycles.

- **Merit:** Reflects ecological patterns and farming schedules of Mesoamerica.

- **Study potential:** Medium–high for climate history, ethnobotany, and sustainable agriculture.

5. Mayan Cyclical Calendars (e.g. Tzolk'in, Haab’, Long Count)

- **What it is:** Complex system combining ritual and solar calendars.

- **Merit:** Rich cultural tool; tracks time with astronomical and ritual precision.

- **Study potential:** High for archaeology, anthropology, and ancient astronomy.

6. Solar Terms (from East Asian calendars)

- **What it is:** 24 segments dividing the year based on the Sun's position; used in Chinese and other East Asian traditions.

- **Merit:** Excellent for seasonal observation; aligns closely with ecological transitions.

- **Study potential:** High for agroecology, phenology (study of biological cycles), and cultural climatology.

Symbolic or Esoteric Systems

These are largely symbolic and have **low scientific reliability**, but cultural or psychological insights may warrant niche study:

7. Zodiac (Western or Chinese astrology)

- **What it is:** Celestial-based symbolic systems tying personality and fate to star positions.
- **Merit:** Lacks empirical validity for prediction, but deeply influential.
- **Study potential:** Low for scientific prediction, but moderate in cultural psychology, archetypal studies, and sociology.

8. Computus (Easter calculation method)

- **What it is:** A method of calculating the date of Easter based on lunar cycles and equinoxes.
- **Merit:** Religious and historical significance, with ties to the Metonic cycle.
- **Study potential:** Moderate for history of science, ecclesiastical timekeeping.

The **Chinese agricultural calendar** is a **time-tested system** that blends astronomy, ecology, and culture. While it's not predictive in a magical sense, it remains **remarkably effective for forecasting seasonal change** and guiding agriculture, especially in East Asia. It's a **living example** of how traditional knowledge can inform modern ecological and agricultural science.

How Do Meteorologists Make Weather Forecasts?

Meteorologists use a combination of:

1. **Observations**
    - From satellites, weather balloons, radar, and ground stations.

- These provide real-time data on temperature, pressure, humidity, wind, etc.

2. **Numerical Weather Prediction (NWP) Models**
    - These are complex computer models that solve equations of fluid motion (physics of the atmosphere).
    - Examples include:
        - **GFS (Global Forecast System)** – USA
        - **ECMWF (European Centre model)** – highly regarded for accuracy
        - **NAM, ICON, UKMO**, and others
3. **Data Assimilation**
    - Observations are blended into the model's current state to improve accuracy, a process like giving the model a reality check.

4. **Human Interpretation**
    - Forecasters interpret raw model outputs to adjust for local geography and microclimates (e.g., how a mountain or lake affects weather).

How Far Ahead Is a Forecast Reliable?

Beyond 10 days, models can’t accurately predict specific conditions like rain at your location—they shift toward **probabilistic forecasts** ("there’s a 30% chance of rain next weekend").

- This is due to **chaos theory**—small uncertainties grow rapidly over time (the “butterfly effect”).

How Might AI Models Change Meteorology?

AI and machine learning (ML) are starting to **augment or even compete with traditional models**:

Examples:

- **Google DeepMind’s GraphCast**: Predicts global weather patterns **10 days ahead** more accurately and much faster than traditional models.
- **NVIDIA's FourCastNet**: Uses deep learning to produce accurate forecasts in **seconds**, instead of hours.

Strengths of AI Models:

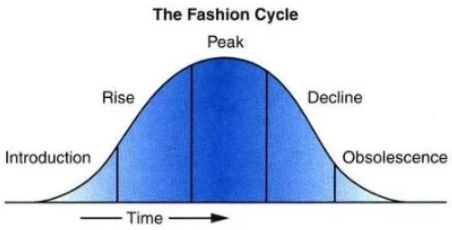
- **Faster run times** (can run in real time or near real time).
- **Better at pattern recognition** (can detect relationships missed by physics-based models).
- **Efficient at short-term, local forecasting** (e.g., “will it rain on my street in 2 hours?”).

Limitations:

- AI models can lack **physical explainability**—they don’t "know" the laws of physics.
- They require **huge amounts of training data**, which might be biased or incomplete.
- Still in early deployment—best used as **complements**, not replacements.

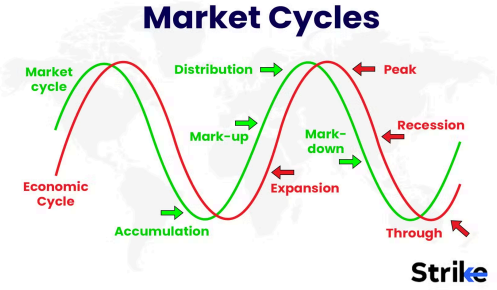
Stable vs. Unstable Equilibria: The difference between stable and unstable equilibria lies in the slope of the line on the phase plot near the equilibrium point. Stable equilibria feature a negative slope (negative feedback), while unstable equilibria have a positive slope (positive feedback).

Fashion Cycle and Nostalgia Cycle: The fashion cycle is a natural progression of a trend that includes five stages: introduction, rise in popularity, peak of popularity, decline in popularity, and rejection. There is also a nostalgia cycle, which suggests that trends resurface after a specific duration, often around 20 to 30 years. This cycle has been thought to be disrupted by the internet, altering its duration. In pop culture, the nostalgia pendulum arises as former consumers of culture create new content referencing their childhood favorites approximately 30 years later. This phenomenon occurs because those with disposable income are nostalgic for their youth, prompting artists to create works that resonate with that audience.



24-Hour News Cycle and Business Cycle: A news cycle is the time frame between news editions, where events are reported, and public reactions are covered. The 24-hour news cycle refers to how news is constantly reported and updated, especially with social media's impact.

Business cycles: comprise intervals of economic expansion followed by recession. Changes in these cycles have significant effects on society, government, and private sectors. The simplest definition identifies a recession as two consecutive quarters of negative GDP growth.



Market Cycle and Eroom's Law: Market cycles show recurring patterns in financial markets, including phases like accumulation, mark-up, distribution, and downturn. Eroom's law notes that drug discovery is becoming slower and more costly over time, despite technological advancements. Four causes include the challenge of incremental drug benefits, cautious regulatory expectations, over-investment in resources, and misconceptions about research efficiencies.

Enshittification: describes the decline in quality of online products and services over time, initially providing high-quality offerings that degrade to maximize profits. Recommendations for improvement include respecting the end-to-end principle and ensuring user rights to exit platforms easily.